

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended): A ~~Powered~~ powered test-tube agitation device including a plate ~~(12)~~ having a rest ~~(13)~~ for a test tube to be agitated and a powered mechanism ~~(15)~~ operating the plate ~~(12)~~ in agitation, characterized in that the device comprises an optical detection means ~~(17, 117)~~ for optical detection of the entry of an object into a predetermined zone above the plate ~~(12)~~, the optical detection means ~~(17, 117)~~ being operatively connected to the powered mechanism ~~(15)~~ to activate operation thereof.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The ~~Device~~ device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the optical detection means includes a photoelectric reflection detection device ~~(17)~~.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The ~~Device~~ device in accordance with claim 2, characterized in that the photoelectric reflection detection device includes an infrared emitter ~~(17a)~~ and an infrared receiver ~~(17b)~~ arranged close to the side of said plate ~~(12)~~.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The ~~Device~~ device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the optical detection means includes a barrier photoelectric detection device ~~(117a, 117b)~~.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The ~~Device~~ device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the optical detection means ~~(17, 117)~~ activates the powered mechanism ~~(15)~~ with a predetermined

delay.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The Device device in accordance with claim 5, characterized in that the delay is between 10 ms and 1 s and preferably 100 ms.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The Device device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the powered mechanism ~~(15)~~ is started with a predetermined ramp of increase in the frequency and/or amplitude of the plate agitation movement.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The Device device in accordance with claim 2, characterized in that the photoelectric reflection detection device ~~(17)~~ is arranged in front of the rest ~~(13)~~ and turned towards the rear of the device.